

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, AR

SUBJECT: DAMASCO MEETS WITH FREJULI YOUTH

1. SUMMARY. SECRETARY OF THE PRESIDENCY DAMASCO HELD A MEETING WITH FREJULI YOUTH LEADERS ON MARCH 19. WHILE NOT NOTEWORTHY FOR ITS CONTENT, THE MEETING MAY HAVE SIGNIFICANCE AS MARKING THE REOPENING OF COMMUNICATIONS WITH LEFTIST YOUTH. IN ADDITION, IT SUGGESTS THAT DAMASCO MAY HAVE REPLACED SOLANO LIMA AS THE CONDUIT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THIS SECTOR OF THE YOUTH. END SUMMARY.

2. SECRETARY OF THE PRESIDENCY COLONEL VICENTE DAMASCO HELD A MEETING ON MARCH 19 IN THE PRESIDENTIAL RESIDENCE IN OLIVOS WITH LEADERS OF VARIOUS FREJULI YOUTH GROUPS. THE LEADERS OF THE LEFTIST PERONIST YOUTH GROUPS THAT COMPRISE THE "REVOLUTIONARY TENDENCY" WERE ABSENT IN ORDER TO AVOID "FRICTION". THEY DID SPEAK WITH DAMASCO AFTERWARDS, HOWEVER, TO VOICE THEIR CONCERN REGARDING THE ARREST OF MONTONERO LEADER MARIO FIRMENICH.

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3. FIRMENICH WAS PICKED UP ON MARCH 18 AND CHARGED WITH

POSSESSION OF ILLEGAL FIREARMS AND FALSIFIED DOCUMENTS.
HE WAS RELEASED ON MARCH 20.

4. IN THE MEETING, DAMASCO SOLICITED THE VIEWS OF THE FREJULI YOUTH CONCERNING YOUTH'S ROLE IN NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION AND ON WHAT WOULD BE THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY FOR THEM TO ORGANIZE. HE AGREED TO MEET AGAIN NEXT WEEK AND THERE WAS AN INDICATION THE "TENDENCY" WOULD BE INCLUDED.

5. THE YOUTH LEADERS, FOR THEIR PART, EXPRESSED THEIR CONCERN REGARDING RECENT EVENTS IN CORDOBA AND THE NUMEROUS ARRESTS OF LEFTISTS.

6. COMMENT. WHILE THE CONTENT OF THE MEETING IS NOT NOTEWORTHY, THE EVENT DOES HAVE OTHER INTERESTING AND PERHAPS SIGNIFICANT FACETS. FIRST, THE MEETING BETWEEN A GOA OFFICIAL AND THE LEFTIST YOUTH, PARTICULARLY THE "TENDENCY" (IF INDEED THEY DO ATTEND NEXT WEEK), MARKS THE REOPENING OF COMMUNICATIONS THAT WERE BROKEN OFF WHEN THE "TENDENCY" LEADERS REFUSED TO MEET WITH PERON ON JAN 31. PERON'S WEEKLY MEETINGS WITH YOUTH (WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN HELD SINCE FEB 14) WERE THEN REDUCED TO A MONOLOGUE WITH RIGHTWING JP LEADERS WHO HAVE ONLY LIMITED NUMBER OF FOLLOWERS.

7. SECONDLY, THE FACT THAT DAMASCO AND NOT SOLANO LIMA HELD THE MEETING SUGGESTS THAT THE FORMER MAY HAVE REPLACED THE LATTER AS THE CONDUIT BETWEEN THE LEFTIST JP AND THE GOVERNMENT (SEE BA 1328). WHILE THIS ADDS TO DAMASCO'S PRESTIGE, IT INVOLVES SOME RISK TO HIM IF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES FOR WHOM HE SERVES AS A BRIDGE GO SOUR. IT ALSO OPENS HIM UP TO CRITICISM FROM RIGHTWING PERONISTS IF HE BECOMES OVER-IDENTIFIED WITH THEIR ADVERSARIES ON THE LEFT (AS IT DID FOR SOLANO LIMA). THERE ARE ALSO NO DOUBT ELEMENTS IN THE ARMY WHO TAKE A DIM VIEW OF AN ACTIVE DUTY OFFICER DABBLING TOO MUCH IN POLITICS. DAMASCO SHOULD BE WELL AWARE THAT CARCAGNO AND CESIO BOTH FOUND THEMSELVES OUT OF A JOB DUE IN NO SMALL PART TO THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH THE LEFTIST JP.

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8. HOWEVER, DAMASCO WOULD NOT TACKLE THIS ASSIGNMENT WITHOUT ORDERS FROM ABOVE. IT IS TOO EARLY TO TELL HOW MUCH OF A POLICY SHIFT ON PERON'S PART THIS INITIAL GAMBIT REPRESENTS. IT IS UNLIKELY HOWEVER THAT THIS FENCE-MENDING MOVE WILL BE REFLECTED IN ANY SIGNIFICANT OR MATERIAL CONCESSION TO THE LEFT.

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